

Thomas Jefferson to Daniel Carroll, February 1, 1793, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

Jefferson to Daniel Carroll

Philadelphia, February 1, 1793.

JEFFERSON TO MR. CARROLL

Dear Sir:

Doctor Thornton's plan of a capitol⁴² has been produced, and has so captivated the eyes and judgment of all as to leave no doubt you will prefer it when it shall be exhibited to you; as no doubt exists here of its preference over all which have been produced, and among its admirers no one is more decided than him whose decision is most important. It is simple, noble, beautiful, excellently distributed, and moderate in size. The purpose of this letter is to apprize you of this sentiment. A just respect for the right of approbation in the commissioners will prevent any formal decision in the President till the plan shall be laid before you and be approved by you. The Doctor will go with it to your meeting in the beginning of March. In the meantime, the interval of *apparent* doubt may be improved for settling the mind of poor Hallet, whose merit and distresses interest every one for his tranquillity and pecuniary relief. I have taken the liberty of making these private estimates, thinking you would wish to know the true state of the sentiments here on this subject, and am with sincere respect and esteem for your colleagues and yourself, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

⁴² The prize-winner, Dr. William Thornton, was a self-taught architect. He recalled in a letter written on October 12, 1802: "The president and secretary of state published a

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premium of a gold medal of \$500 and a lot for a house in the city of Washington for the best plan and elevation of a capitol of the United States. I lamented not having studied architecture, and resolved to attempt the grand undertaking and study at the same time. I studied some months and worked almost night and day, but I found I was opposed by regular architects from France and various other countries.” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Washington, D. C., XVIII, 176. Reprinted through the courtesy of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D. C.

[P. 508, WRITINGS OF JEFFERSON, Washington, III.]